

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5465

As of February 19, 2013

Title: An act relating to exemptions from licensure as a physical therapist.

Brief Description: Concerning exemptions from licensure as a physical therapist.

Sponsors: Senators Dammeier, Schlicher, Becker, Keiser and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/18/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: The practice of physical therapy is based on movement and science and involves evaluating individuals with functional limitations in movement in order to determine a plan of therapeutic intervention that includes therapeutic exercise, therapeutic massage, and patient-related instruction. Both physical therapists and physical therapist assistants must be licensed by the Department of Health (Department). Physical therapist assistants perform physical therapy procedures and related tasks that have been delegated by a supervising physical therapist. These tasks must fall within the scope of the physical therapy practice and may not exceed the education or training of the physical therapy assistant.

Physical therapist assistants are not required to be licensed if they are pursuing a physical therapist assistant degree and satisfying clinical education requirements while under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist. Physical therapists are permitted to supervise a total of two assistive personnel.

Summary of Bill: A physical therapist assistant is not required to be licensed if the physical therapist assistant is pursuing a physical therapist assistant degree and satisfying clinical education requirements while under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist or a licensed physical therapist assistant.

Physical therapists may supervise more than two assistive personnel if those assistants are pursuing a course of study leading to a degree as a physical therapist or a physical therapist assistant.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill is a common sense effort to support physical therapist training. Current law overlooks using physical therapist assistants for supervising other physical therapist assistants. There are not enough physical therapists to supervise the physical therapist assistants and these professions have different roles; it is more appropriate to have licensed physical therapist assistants authorized to supervise physical therapist assistants who are in education programs.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dammeier, prime sponsor; Robin Schoenfeld, Physical Therapy Assn. of WA.